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DISPENSER CLOSURE AND CONTAINER

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This invention relates to a container and a dispenser closure member, and particularly to a closed container openable at the top and carrying a closure member that is adapted for placement over the opened top for dispensing the contents of the container.

The container and closure member of the present invention can be adapted to many purposes and are not limited to any particular type of container or to containers used for a particular purpose. However, the invention is well suited to the packaging and dispensing of spices and will be described in relation to such use, although it should be understood that other uses, and containers for other purposes are within the spirit and scope of the invention.

Condiment or spice containers in the past have been made of metal and have been both expensive to manufacture and inconvenient to open and use. In previous spice containers a dispensing aperture was partially cut out in the metal top, and the user was required to punch out this aperture with a spoon. Because of such a partial cut out, previous spice containers were not tightly sealed and some of the aroma or fragrance of the spices in the containers escaped between the time of packaging and the time of purchase by the user.

A metal slide was provided on previous spice cans for covering or uncovering the dispensing aperture. Such a slide was inconvenient to operate, expensive to manufacture, required assembly of a separate part in the making of the complete container, and did not closely cover the dispensing apertures so as to prevent loss of spice fragrance during the period of use of the container.

It is an object of this invention to overcome these deficiencies in previous spice containers and to provide an improved spice container and dispenser closure member that is economical to manufacture, convenient to use, and effective in sealing in and preserving the fragrance of packaged spices.

Another object of the invention is to use economical material in making a lightweight spice container that seals and protects packaged spices and that has a dispenser closure member that is disposable with the container and yet rugged, convenient, functional, attractive, economical, and effective in closing dispenser apertures as well as in dispensing spices.

Another object of the invention is to package spices in closely sealed paper or cardboard containers, and to provide a disposable dispenser closure member with each container for closing off and dispensing the contents from the container after the container is torn open by the user.

Another object of the invention is to mold in one-piece a plastic closure member for a spice container that is openable by the user.

Another object of the invention is to package spices in a container having two closure structures one of which seals the container until it reaches the consumer, such sealing closure being destroyed when the container is opened, and the other closure member being carried on the container for use after the container is opened and being adapted for dispensing spices from the container.

Other objects of the invention will be apparent hereinafter from the specification and from the recital of the appended claims. To these and other ends, the invention resides in certain improvements and combinations of

parts, all as will be hereinafter more fully described, the novel features being pointed out in the claims at the end of the specification.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 shows a top plan view of a cover flap for a dispenser closure according to the invention;

FIG. 2 shows a top plan view of the base portion of a dispenser closure according to the invention;

FIG. 3 shows a cross section of the cover flap of FIG. 1 taken along the line 3—3;

FIG. 4 shows a cross section of the base portion of FIG. 2 taken along the line 4—4; such base portion being carried on a sealed spice container also shown in cross section;

FIG. 5 shows the cover flap as sectioned for FIG. 3 secured to the base portion as sectioned in FIG. 4 to form a complete dispenser closure which is fixed to an opened spice container; and

FIG. 6 shows an exploded view of a spice container, the top removed from the container, and a dispenser closure for the container according to the invention.

Generally, the invention resides in a spice container of rendable material such as cardboard or paper that is torn open by the user and a dispenser closure member that is carried on the container before opening and is fixed over the opening in the container for closing the opening and dispensing spices.

The container or box **10** shown in FIGS. 4–6 is preferably formed of paper or cardboard, but can be formed of other materials that are manually rendable so that an opening can be made such as by manually tearing the container **10** along a line of weakness. Container **10** is adapted to cooperate with dispenser closure **12** as will be described hereinafter. Otherwise container **10** is a simple box made in any of a number of well known ways. It is preferably tightly sealed for preserving the fragrance of spices and is rugged enough to withstand normal spice container handling.

The dispenser closure member **12** will be described briefly and then the cooperation between container **10** and dispenser closure **12** will be described.

Dispenser closure **12** is formed of a base portion **13** shown in FIG. 2 and a cover flap portion **14** shown in FIG. 1 and having integrally hinged flaps **19** and **20**. As shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, cover flap portion **14** is secured to base portion **13** to form the complete dispenser closure **12**.

Cover flap portion **14** together with base portion **13** can be molded in a single piece of any of a variety of moldable or plastic materials. A preferred material for one piece molding of dispenser closure **12** is polypropylene because of its ability to form a thin hinge connection that can be repeatedly bent or flexed without breaking or cracking. In a preferred method of molding dispenser closure **12**, cover flap portion **14** is molded alongside base portion **13** and connected to base portion **13** by a thin, longitudinal hinge. After molding, cover flap portion **14** is folded over base portion **13** and secured to the latter by forcing deformable projections **15** of cover flap portion **14** through apertures **16** in base portion **13** for a snap fit best illustrated in the cross section view of FIG. 5. Cover flap portion **14** could also be cemented or fused to base portion **13**. After cover flap portion **14** is secured to base portion **13**, the thin hinge connecting them is broken to allow movement of flaps **19** and **20**. This can be done soon after the molding operation during the manufacture of the dispenser closure or can be left to the ultimate user to accomplish. The longitudinal hinge connecting cover flap portion **14** and base portion **13** can be thin enough so that it is broken when cover flaps **19** and **20** are manually raised from base portion **13**.

As shown in FIG. 2, base portion **13** preferably has two